



# russian analytical digest

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## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND THE GREEN MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA

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## Analysis

# The Environment and Politics in Russia

By Alexei Yablokov, Moscow

## Abstract

Russia faces serious ecological challenges, which are having adverse effects on both the natural environment and the health of the population, demonstrated by its lower than average life expectancy for a developed country. The problems are exacerbated by the state authorities' policy of "de-environmentalism" or "de-ecologization", whereby environmental costs are deemed acceptable in the quest for economic gains. A significant change in mindset towards the environment is required in both the power-structure and wider society in order to arrest the trend of environmental neglect in Russia.

## The Consequences of Environmental Neglect

Every year in Russia, approximately 35,000 people die as a result of car accidents, 40,000 from alcohol poisoning and 490,000 from environmental-related diseases (data taken from WTO in 2004). Furthermore, experts claim that about half of Russia's 180,000 miscarriages per annum are due to environmental causes.

Russia is the only developed country where life expectancy has declined over the past 20 years. The life expectancy for men in 1986 was 64.0 and by 2006 life expectancy had declined to 59.3. It is significant that the average life expectancy is 3–5 years shorter in the most environmentally-unfavorable areas of the Russian Federation (approximately 14% of the territory, on which 40% (60 million people) of the country's population live) compared with less polluted areas.

Contrary to the assumption that increased economic development has a positive impact on the health of a country's population, life expectancy in Russia declined between 1998 and 2004, a period which saw substantial economic growth. This trend illustrates the huge impact that ecological contamination has on life expectancy.

## Air Quality

According to official figures approximately 60 million Russians live in areas of "high" or "very high" levels of air pollution. Industrial emissions have significantly increased since 2000. Traffic pollution accounts for around 50% of the increase in levels of anthropogenic emissions. In major cities and some regions, traffic accounts for 80–90% of air pollution.

One in every two Russians is negatively affected by the high concentrations of solid particulate matter (dust) in the air, with more than 2.4 million people exposed to concentrations of over 300 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . By comparison, in the US, which has a population twice that of Russia and a significantly larger industrial-complex,

only about 2 million people are exposed to equivalent levels. In 49 of the Russian Federation's 83 administrative units, more than half of the urban population lives in areas with "high" or "very high" levels of air pollution. However, the official data on air pollution does not provide a comprehensive picture, because air quality is not monitored in large areas, in which around 40% of Russia's urban populations live.

## Water Quality

The use of environmentally unfriendly technology in industry and agriculture, the dumping of inadequately treated industrial, agricultural and municipal waste and the uncontrolled flow of such polluted waters has led to widespread water pollution. As a result, in many regions of Russia surface water is polluted to levels many tens of times above the permissible level, and thus it is not rare to find areas affected by "high" or "extremely high" pollution. Of all water-waste that enters Russia's reservoirs, 36.1% is contaminated, 7.4% of which remains entirely untreated. Water quality in the majority of Russia's water-bodies does not meet normal regulatory requirements. Only 12–14% of Russia's lakes and rivers are ecologically clean (see Figure 1 on p. 5). The quality of groundwater in Russia is also deteriorating, with some 30% already polluted. According to some views, inland and marginal seas contain pollutants 3–5 times over the permissible levels. As a consequence, every other Russian drinks water that does not meet hygienic standards. Almost 30% of Russia's surface water, which is used as drinking water, does not meet quality standards. In a number of administrative units of the Russian Federation, this percentage is even higher (see Table 1 on p. 5).

## Contamination of Land and Soil

The dumping of waste and contamination of soil and vegetation is a universal phenomenon in Russia. The

majority of Russia's industrial and agricultural land was initially environmentally damaged between 1950 and 1970. Since then, the process of environmental degradation has further accelerated. The decline in the fertility of land has accelerated as a result of soil erosion, disruption in land-use, reduction in the amount of natural/organic fertilizers and increasing chemical and radioactive contamination. At the present time, approximately 40% of the country's agricultural land is subject to wind erosion and 18% to water erosion.

Federal monitoring of land quality is carried out in only a small part of the Russian Federation. Yet, even this limited data shows that contamination of land is occurring in some areas on a massive-scale. On average, 11% of Russia's residential areas are contaminated by dangerous metals. In some administrative units, such contaminated land comprises half of the inhabited areas (see Figure 2 on p. 6).

This amount of sanitarily and hygienically (microbiological, parasites) contaminated land is unacceptable for a developed country. The level of contamination is a consequence of the state authorities' neglect of the need for sanitary removal of industrial and commercial waste from inhabited areas (including the appearance of illegal dumps), the absence of centralized sewage systems in some areas and the poor conditions of sewage systems in others.

In all territories that produce oil, the extraction, refining and transportation process has led to significant contamination of soil by petroleum products. According to expert estimates, 1.5% of Russia's soil is contaminated by oil products, and about 0.3% is contaminated by heavy metals.

The bottom of the Volga reservoirs and other such reservoirs have accumulated tens of millions of salts from heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals, which have turned these bodies of water into disorganized and uncontrolled depositories of toxic waste.

A major ecological problem remains the storage and reuse of solid industrial and home waste, the amount of which is growing. Presently, there exists hundreds of thousands of unsanctioned dumping sites, which have a negative impact both on air quality and the quality of groundwater.

### **Radiation and Chemical Contamination**

Many areas in the Altai *Krai*, Altai Republic, the *oblasts* Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Orenburg, Sverdlovsk and Irkutsk, and the *Autonomous Okrug*s of Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk remain (and will be for the long term) contaminated by radioactive fall-

out from the production and testing of nuclear weapons. The real time-bombs are 85 underground nuclear explosions carried out "in the interest of the national economy" in Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, Astrakhan, Perm, Orenburg, Arkhangelsk *oblasts* and some other areas of Russia between 1964–1988. The nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986 has created dangerous levels of radioactively contamination in Bryansk, Tula, Kaluga and Orel *oblasts*. Dozens of radioisotope thermoelectric generators, which were used in the 1990's at meteorological stations and lighthouses, have been abandoned or lost and are now the source of dangerous radioactive contamination along the coasts of the Baltic, Barents, Arctic and Far Eastern seas. In addition, in medical procedures, too high a level of radiation is used.

### **Public Health and the Environment**

The poor condition of the atmosphere, water and soil in Russia impacts on public health. Environmental pollution, past and present, is an important factor in the high mortality rate in Russia. It would not be an exaggeration to say that illnesses related to poor environmental conditions touch the majority of the Russian population. Half the number of people dying from environmental causes is preventable. As a result, 2.5–3 million lives could have been saved between 1995 and 2009 had it not been for dire environmental conditions.

### **Policy of "De-environmentalism"**

Russia's environmental problems are the result of the state policy of "de-environmentalism". The logic of "de-environmentalism", which is often seen in official documents, is that Russia will start dealing with environmental problems once it is rich, and that economic growth requires the use of all of Russia's available natural resources, which necessitates lower standards of environmental practice (laws, norms, practices, ecological controls and monitoring). The outcome of this approach, which was established under Yeltsin and developed under Putin and Medvedev, has been to turn Russia into a reservoir of natural resources for other countries, and the place where outdated technologies can be used. The "de-environmentalism" policy has developed through the following stages:

- The dissolution of The Environmental Protection Agency in 2000
- A weakening of environmental protection legislation (since 1998), including in the Forestry sector (2004–2006), in Water (2006) and Urban Planning (2006)
- A weakening of state environmental controls (since 2000)

- A reduction in the sphere of activity of official environmental-impact assessments (2004)
- A slowing down in the creation of environmentally-protected territories (2000–2008)
- The pursuit of environmental activists and the obstruction of environmental NGOs (since 1997)
- The destruction of the system of environmental education (since 2000)
- A reduction of funding for environmental programs (since 1995).

In 2001, federal expenditure on environmental protection amounted to 0.4% of the total federal budget. In 2008 and 2009, it amounted to less than 0.1% of the total budget. Taking into account the significant increase in the state budget during this period, this reduction seems even more dismissive.

A major source of the increase in Russian income is from energy exports. The Russian Federation's resource-economy is linked with the development of consumer-driven ethics. Figure 3 on p. 7 illustrates the increase in Russian income from energy exports. Greed and the pursuit of money have intoxicated both elites and society, with petro-dollars corrupting the Russian power-structure. As a result, the overarching principle of Russian society, in the last decade and a half, is to get rich at any price.

The huge profits from the resource-economy in combination with an autocratic regime have led to a split in

Russian society. This is demonstrated by the disproportionate gap between the average salary and the number of billionaires in Russia, which is significantly greater than the gap found in other European societies.

Against the background of this split society, environmental issues play a significant role for the health of some in Russia, but not for others. Some are able to drink clean water, consume environmentally clean products and use the health of others, who live and work in environmentally dirty conditions. As a result, the life expectancy of the former is 80, and the latter is 60.

### Conclusion

The resolution of Russia's environmental problems is connected with the need to renew the electoral process, restore the independence of courts and to reestablish weakened environmental legislation. It is necessary to restore federal agencies for the protection of the environment, reestablish environmental safe-guards, sharply increase state environmental controls and monitoring and strengthen nature-conservation prosecutors. In addition, it is necessary to dramatically increase expenditure on protecting the environment, dispense information about the state of the environment, highlight the connection between pollution and health and develop environmental education, instruction and scientific research.

#### *About the Author*

Alexey Yablokov is the Chairman of the Green Party faction of the Joint Democratic "YABLOKO" political party, Deputy Chairman of the Ecological council and a Councilor of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is a former special adviser to President Boris Yeltsin on environmental and public health affairs.

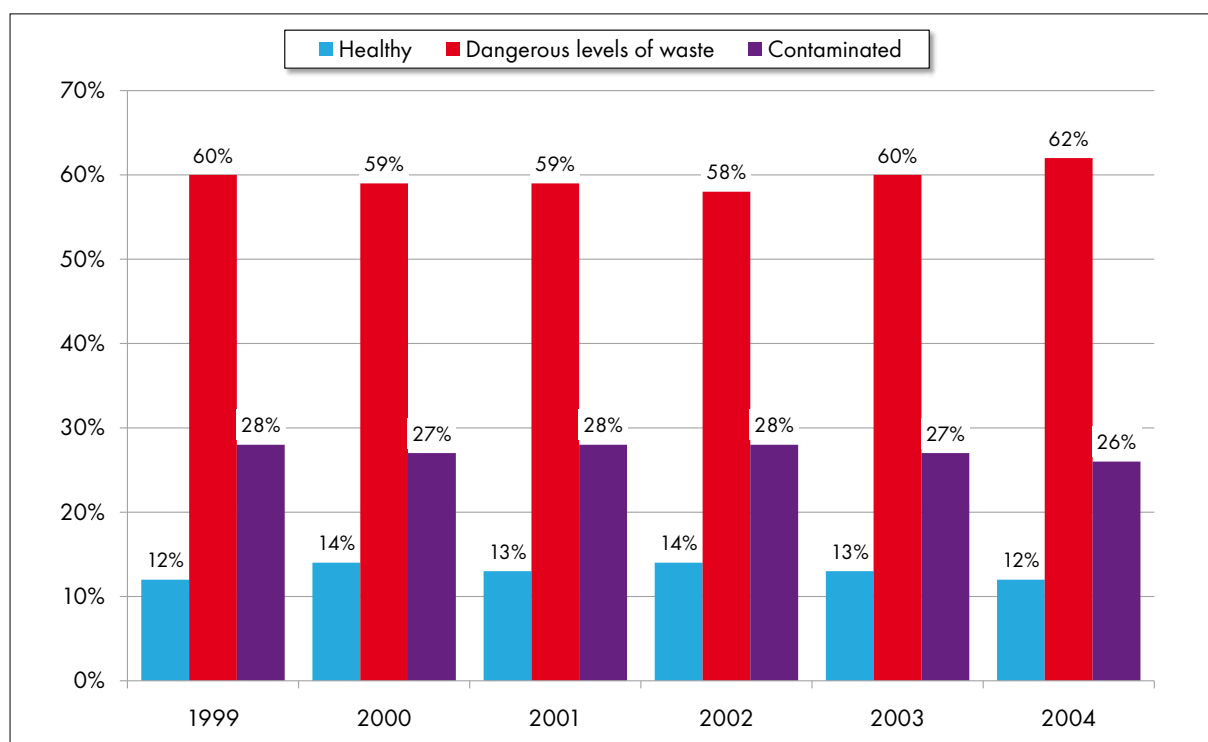
#### *Recommended Reading*

- Zubarevich, N.V., "Sotsialnye problemy Rossii" [Russia's Social Problems], *Otechestvennye zapiski*, no. 5, 2008.
- Kotovets, V.A., "Ekologicheskaja bezopasnost poka ne garantiruetsia" [Ecological safety is so far not guaranteed], *Ekologicheskii navigator (Volgograd)*, no. 6, 2009.
- Revich, B.A., "Goryachie točki" khimicheskogo zagriazneniya okružhaiushchei sredy i zdorove naseleniia Rossii [The "hot spots" of chemical pollution of the environment and the health of the Russian population]. Moscow 2007.
- Yablokov, A.V., "Rossiya: zdorove prirody i liudei" [Russia: the health of nature and people], *Seriia "Ekologicheskaja politika" RODP "YABLOKO"*, Moscow 2007.
- Yablokov, A.V., "Okružhaiushchaia sreda i zdorove moskvichei" [The environment and the health of Muscovites], *Seriia "Ekologicheskaja politika" RODP "YABLOKO"*, Moscow 2009.

**Tables and Diagrams**

**Data on Pollution in Russia**

**Figure 1: Ecological Condition of Russian Rivers and Lakes, 1999–2004**



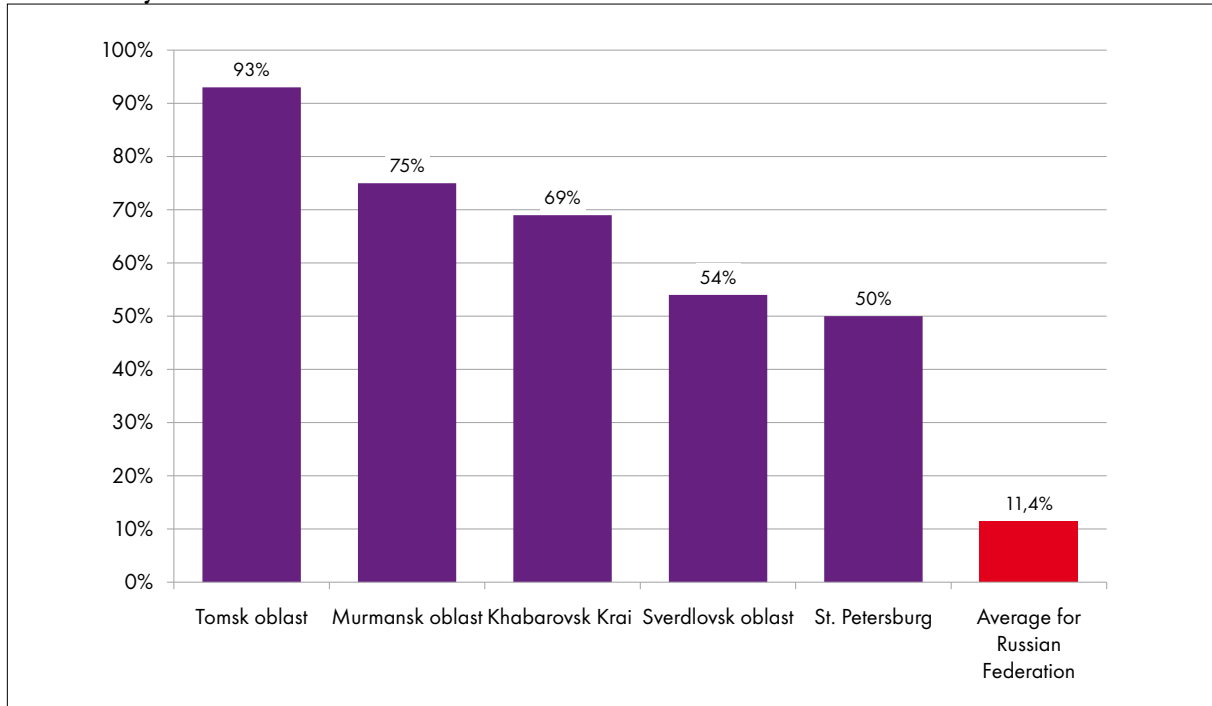
Source: Yablokov, A.V., “Rossiya: zdorove prirody i liudei”, Seriya “Ekologicheskaja politika” RODP “YABLOKO”, Moscow 2007.

**Table 1: Russian Federal Territories With the Highest Number of Unsatisfactory Drinking-Water Samples**

Percentage of samples that exceeded the maximum permitted value	Federal Territory
More than 80	Arkhangelsk oblast
70 – 79	Nizhny Novgorod oblast (2003)
60 – 69	Samara oblast (2004), Nizhny Novgorod oblast (2004), Tver oblast (2003)
50 – 59	Novgorod oblast, Vladimir oblast, Kemerovo oblast (2004), Ivanovo oblast (2004), Samara oblast (2003)
40 – 49	Kemerovo oblast (2003), Ivanovo oblast (2003), Karelian Republic (2004), Tver oblast (2004), Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, Vologda oblast (2003), Moscow (2003)
29.3	Average for Russian Federation

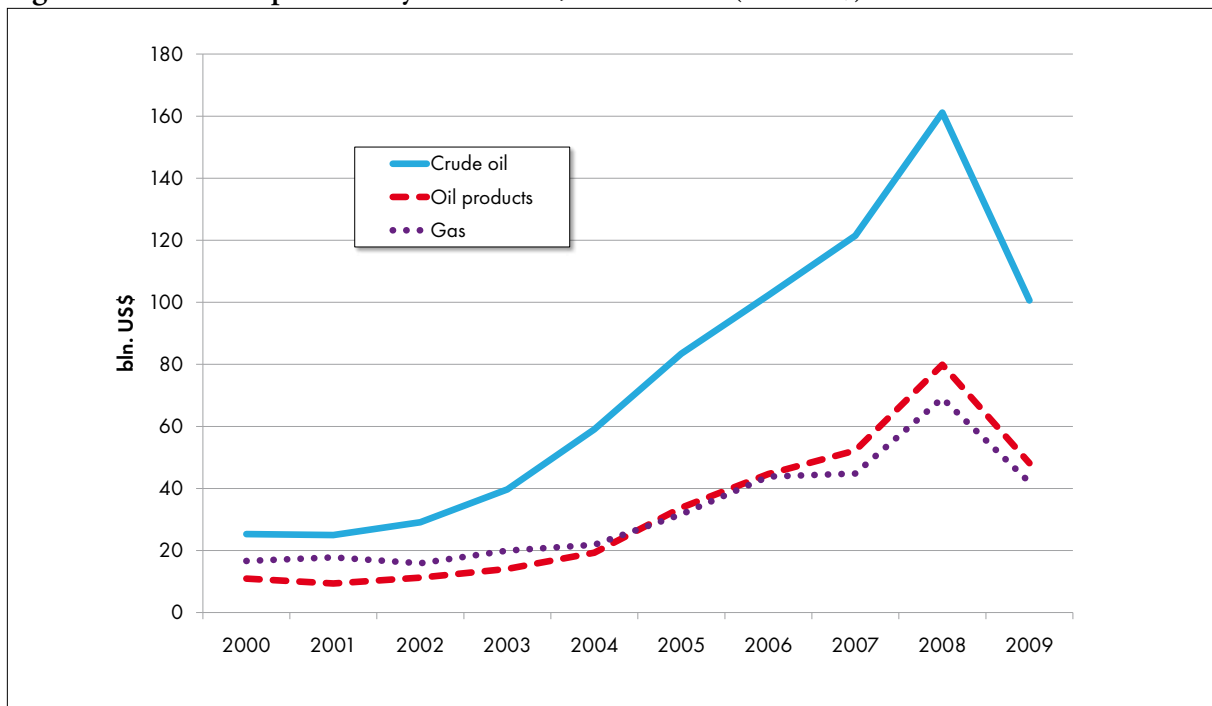
Source: Yablokov, A.V., “Rossiya: zdorove prirody i liudei”, Seriya “Ekologicheskaja politika” RODP “YABLOKO”, Moscow 2007.

**Figure 2: Proportion of Polluted Residential Areas That Are in Violation of Hygiene Standards for Sanitary-Chemical Indicators of Soil**



Source: Yablokov, A.V., "Rossiya: zdorove prirody i liudei", Seriya "Ekologicheskaja politika" RODP "YABLOKO", Moscow 2007.

**Figure 3: Russian Exports of Hydrocarbons, 2000–2009 (bln. US\$)**



Source: Russian Central Bank, [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit\\_statistics/crude\\_oil.htm](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit_statistics/crude_oil.htm), [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit\\_statistics/oil\\_products.htm](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit_statistics/oil_products.htm), [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit\\_statistics/gas.htm](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=credit_statistics/gas.htm)

**Opinion Poll**

## Perception of Ecological Problems

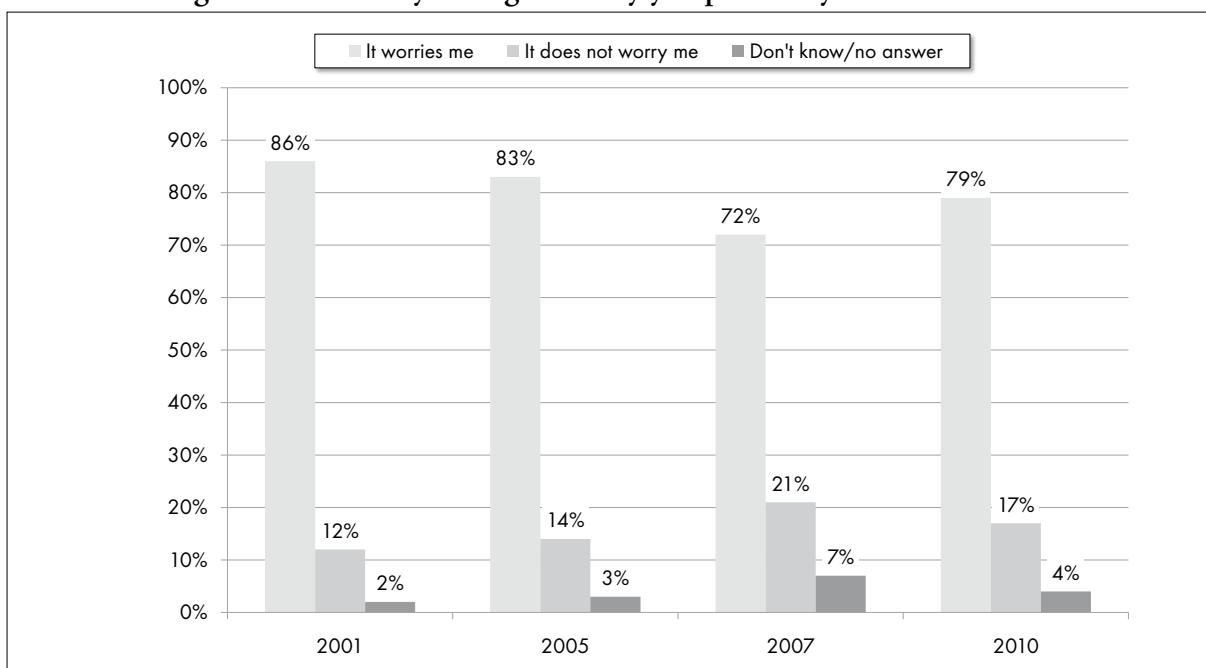
Which of the following societal problems worry you most of all? (choice of 5-6 answers, answers sorted by highest percentage in last column)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
					January	June
1. Rising prices	71%	70%	64%	82%	75%	75%
2. Increasing unemployment	39%	34%	30%	25%	57%	56%
3. Poverty, pauperization of a majority of the population	53%	51%	52%	45%	42%	46%
4. Economic crisis, bad condition of industry and agriculture	33%	29%	28%	29%	48%	45%
...						
11. Deterioration of ecological situation	17%	24%	22%	23%	14%	19%
12. Increase in crime	29%	29%	28%	27%	19%	16%
...						
24. Conflict between different branches of the government at various levels	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%

Source: representative polls conducted by the Levada Center 2005–2008 and 11–17 June 2009

<http://www.levada.ru./press/2009062302.html>

## Does the ecological situation in your region worry you personally or not?



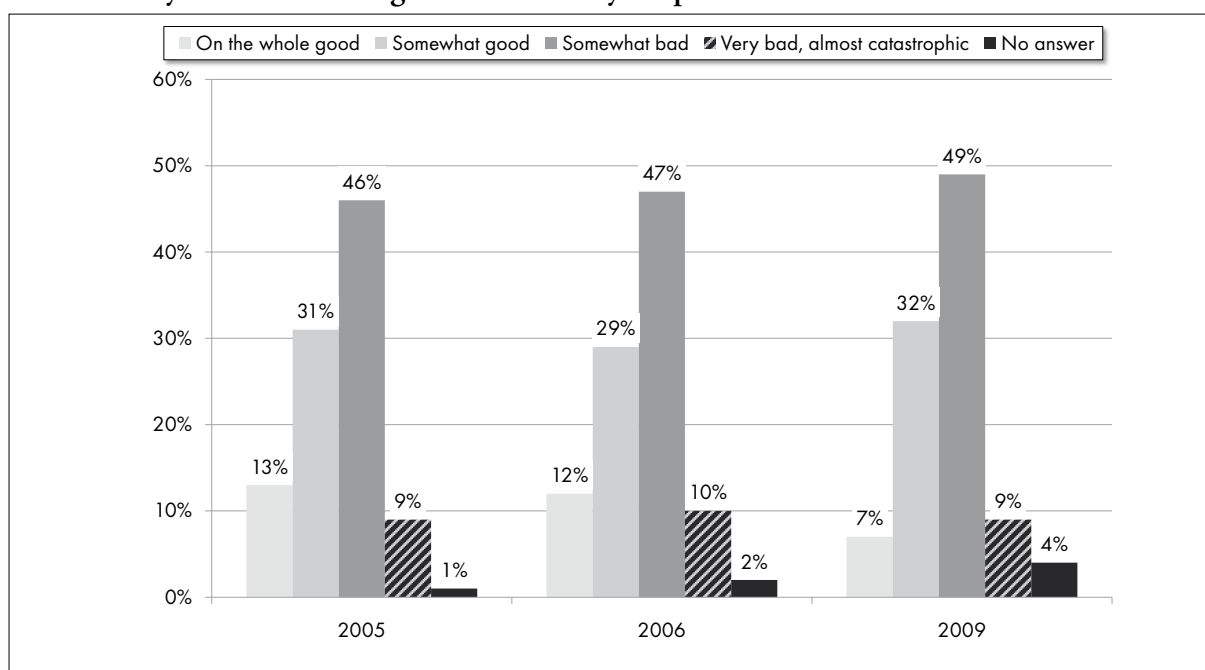
Source: opinion polls conducted by the "Public Opinion Fund" (FOM) 2001–2007 and on 24–25 April 2010 <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom1016/d101615>

**What worries you the most about the ecological situation in your region? (open question for respondents who answered they are worried about the ecological situation, i.e., 79%)**

Garbage, dirt, garbage dump, unhygienic condition in areas of settlement	23%
Water pollution, in general bad, polluted water	21%
Ecological impact of industry, absence of cleaning equipment	16%
Condition and pollution of the air	13%
Deforestation, destruction of forests, forest fires, lack of green areas	11%
Proximity to highways, exhaust fumes, bad condition of the roads	9%
Radioactive pollution, proximity to nuclear power stations and nuclear waste sites	5%
Bad drinking water	3%
Pollution of the environment in general, barbaric treatment of nature	3%
Deterioration of health	2%
Pollution of the soil	1%
Excessive building	1%
Bad quality of food	1%
Climate change	1%
Insufficient attention to problems of nature	1%
Other	1%
No answer	4%

Source: opinion polls conducted by the "Public Opinion Fund" (FOM) on 24–25 April 2010 <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom1016/d101615>

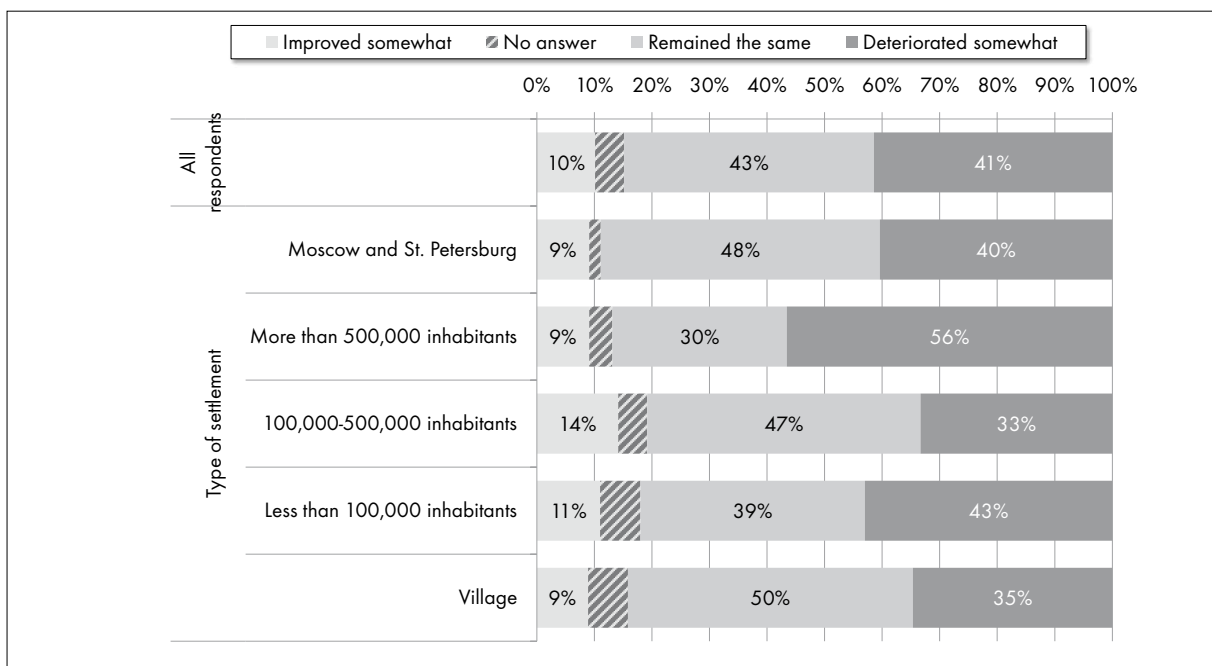
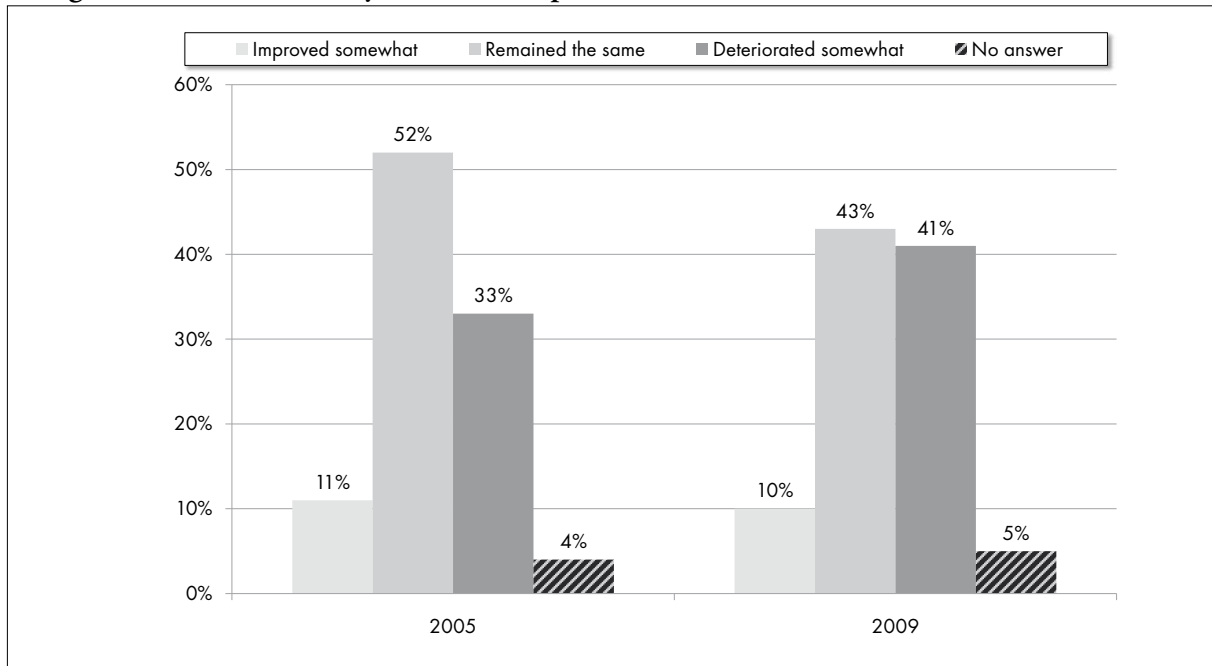
**How would you rate the ecological situation at your place of residence?**



Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by VTsIOM 2005–2006 and on 30–31 May 2009 <http://wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/11956.html>



In your opinion, how has the ecological situation in your region/your place of residence changed within the last five years? (closed question, one answer)



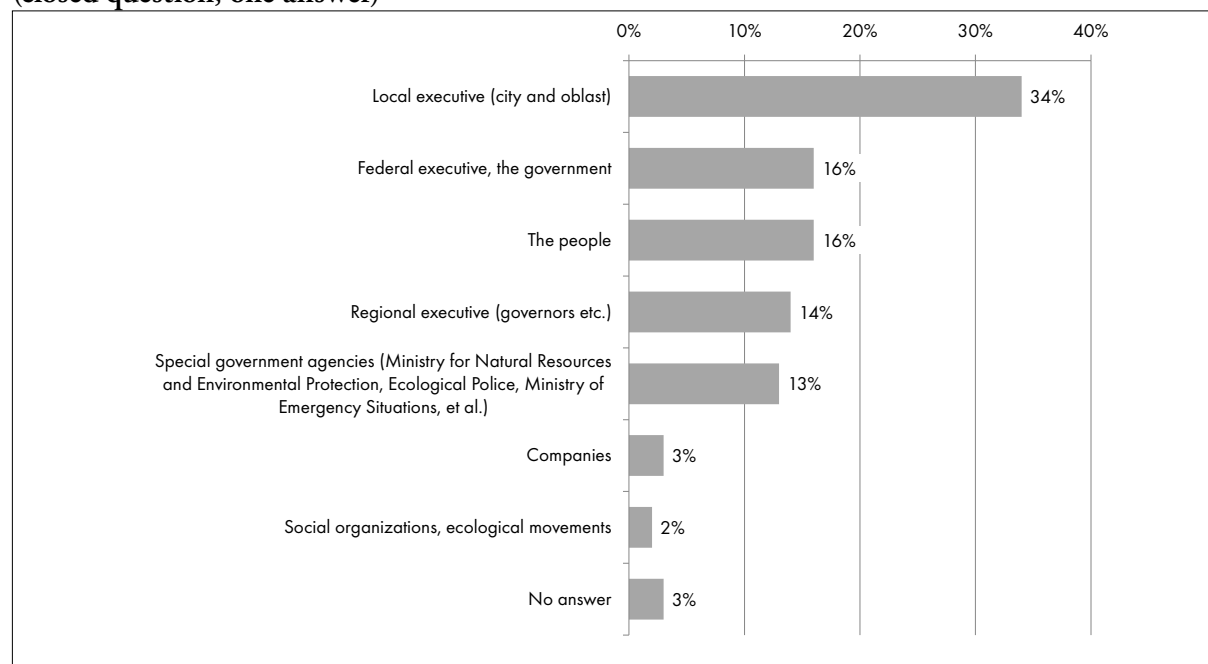
Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by VTsIOM in 2005 and on 30–31 May 2009 <http://wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/11956.html>

**How does the deterioration of the ecological situation at your place of residence become apparent? (closed question, no more than five answers, percentage of respondents who indicated a deterioration of the ecological situation)**

	2005	2009
Air pollution	53%	51%
Pollution of water bodies	56%	51%
Polluted drinking water	41%	37%
Deterioration of health	40%	44%
Unhygienic conditions	38%	35%
Disappearance of forests, green areas, and parks	30%	31%
Increased levels of radiation	23%	9%
Climate change	20%	16%
Contamination of food with chemicals harmful to health	19%	14%
Acid rain	14%	7%
Extinction of species of birds, fishes, and other animals	14%	10%
Increased levels of noise exposure	13%	17%
Other	2%	2%
No answer	3%	3%

Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by VTsIOM in 2005 and on 30–31 May 2009 <http://wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/11956.html>

**In your opinion, who should take responsibility for the ecological situation in your region? (closed question, one answer)**



Source: representative polls conducted by VTsIOM on 30–31 May 2009 <http://wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/12305.html>

## Analysis

# Russia's Lackluster Record on Climate Change

By Samuel Charap, Washington<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has made speeches on climate change that sound similar to those of his Western counterparts. However, despite Medvedev's call to action, Russia has not been a leader on climate issues; in fact, it has taken either a passive stance or used the issue as leverage in global talks and failed to implement a serious domestic mitigation or adaptation program at home.

## Eloquent Speeches

In prepared remarks before a meeting with several ministers and senior aides on February 18, 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev delivered a highly unusual speech on climate change for a senior Russian official. Just two months earlier, the Copenhagen climate talks had produced a document far less ambitious than had been hoped, and many observers had consigned the subject of climate change to the backburner of international politics. It seemed Russia would have done the same, since its leadership's attitude toward global warming had ranged from denying its existence to seeing it purely as a means of augmenting Russia's role in international affairs.

Yet Medvedev, in contrast both to his previous statements on the topic and those of his predecessor and the current prime minister, Vladimir Putin, outlined an approach to Russian climate change policy that sounded strikingly similar to those of Western European countries:

"[The disappointing outcome at Copenhagen] is not a reason to sit back now and do nothing, because we are responsible for the state of our planet... We need to decide today how to make the most effective use of what has been achieved... and outline the best ways for aiding less developed countries to fight climate threats. The new climate agreement represents a real chance for mass introduction [of] energy-efficient and low-emission technology... We are going to improve our energy efficiency and reduce our emissions regardless of whether or not there is an international agreement. This is in our own interest from both an economic and environmental point of view."

Medvedev went on to urge the assembled officials to create incentives for the private sector to play a role in addressing climate change and called for adapting the

government's Climate Doctrine, a framework for policy that he signed in late 2009, to current developments, making it a "living document" and not a "sacred cow." A month later, he repeated these ideas in a speech to the Security Council, a body consisting of Russia's most influential decision-makers.

In short, Medvedev asserted that climate change is real, that global warming threatens Russia's future, that Russia has a responsibility to address it both domestically and in international forums, that doing so can be economically beneficial, and that old policy-making patterns—a regulation-first approach to the economy and paper-tiger framework documents that become irrelevant soon after they are released—need to change if any progress is to be made. The speech is striking both because it is essentially the first time a Russian leader has made this argument coherently and because it is totally divorced from the reality of Russia's current approach to climate change, which can be charitably characterized as lackluster. Indeed, Medvedev has become known for making grand, forward-looking speeches, most of which seem fanciful and generally produce little substantive change.

This article demonstrates that scientific and economic data in fact support Medvedev's assertions. However, it also shows that Russia has either failed to live up to his stated goals or only begun the process of realizing them. Despite Medvedev's call to action, Russia has not been a leader on climate issues; in fact, it has taken either a passive stance or used the issue as leverage on other questions in global talks and failed to implement a serious domestic mitigation or adaptation program.

## Russia and Climate Change

Russia has been and continues to be responsible for a large share of cumulative anthropogenic carbon emissions into the atmosphere. Today, Russia is the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), behind only the United States and China. Perhaps more importantly, before the economic crisis hit, Russia's per capita emissions

<sup>1</sup> This article draws on material from a chapter co-written (with Georgi Safonov) by the author in Anders Åslund, Sergei Guriev and Andrew Kutchins (eds.), *Russia after the Global Economic Crisis* (Washington: Peterson Institute for International Economics and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010, forthcoming).

were growing and were projected to approach the US level by 2030. Russia's third rank is all the more striking given that its emissions dropped by 40% in 1990–98 following the dramatic decline in energy consumption and industrial production precipitated by the economic contraction of the early post-Soviet period. By 2007, emissions had reached only 66% of 1990 levels.

Russia is not only a major contributor to global warming; it is also especially vulnerable to its effects. Temperatures in Russia are rising faster than the world average. In 2008 the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Rosgidromet) issued an extensive report that demonstrated that winter temperatures increased by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in Siberia over the past 120 to 150 years, while the average global temperature rose in that period by only 0.7 degrees. Rosgidromet's calculations demonstrate that Russia will experience global warming to a significantly greater extent than most other countries.

Despite the belief, widely held across its society, that, given its cold temperatures, Russia could benefit from global warming, climate change is, according to the World Bank, a "major threat to Russia" and will have significant negative effects—economic and social—there, not to mention the potentially devastating impacts on its ecosystem. Already Russia is experiencing more floods, windstorms, heat waves, forest fires, and melting of permafrost. In Yakutsk, collapsing ground caused by permafrost melt has damaged the structural integrity of several large apartment buildings, a power station, and a runway at the local airport. The total number of structures damaged as a result of uneven foundation subsidence increased by 61% there in the 1990s compared with the previous decade. Extreme events, snowmelt, and warmer temperatures have precipitated significant tree loss and degradation. And such phenomena are only going to become more common with rising temperatures. Areas of discontinuous permafrost (which covers over 60% of Russia's territory) are particularly at risk; melting will have social and economic effects because of the large amount of oil and gas infrastructure in these areas—93% of natural gas and 75% of oil production occurs in permafrost zones.

Indeed, climate change poses a direct threat to the energy sector, which plays a crucial role in the economy. Most of the extraction and other structures were built on pile foundations using permafrost soils as a base, and therefore their stability is dependent on that permafrost not melting. Already over 7,400 accidents related to melting of permafrost and soil degradation in West Siberia were reported in 2007, while up to \$1.8

billion is spent annually on accidents and upkeep of pipelines. Overall, according to Minister of Natural Resources Yuri Trutnev, climate change could cause up to 5% reduction in GDP, while the cost of dealing with extreme weather events will amount to around \$2 billion annually. Public health could also suffer, since permafrost melt poses a risk to the integrity of the water supply and sewer engineering systems. Permafrost weakening on Novaya Zemlya, where several radioactive waste storage sites are located, could have particularly dire consequences.

Global warming could entail some potential upsides for Russia. In the energy sector, offshore production and transport will likely benefit due to reductions in sea ice, which will lengthen the navigation season in the Arctic, although it is unclear whether these benefits will outweigh the costs to the sector from permafrost melt. Some claim that warmer temperatures will also benefit Russian agriculture. However, studies based on highly detailed models suggest that global warming will have a net zero effect on the sector. Moreover, Russian agriculture is highly inefficient and suffers from low productivity, making it unlikely to be able to take advantage of any potential gains.

### **Russia's Role in International Climate Policy**

Despite both Russia's central role in causing, and thus potentially abating, global warming and its vulnerability to rising temperatures, Moscow has often assumed a passive role in the construction of the international climate regime and scrupulously avoided commitments that would force it to take steps to reduce emissions. Its major contribution—ratification of the Kyoto Protocol when its signature was needed for the treaty to take effect—was driven largely by political factors and has required no meaningful changes in its policies.

Russia has also "contributed" to international efforts to control emissions through the wrenching economic contraction, and resulting drop in emissions, it experienced in the 1990s. For example, were it not for Russia's drop in emissions in that period, the quantitative target of reducing the emissions of Annex I Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which Russia ratified in 1995, to 1990 levels by 2000 would have been impossible.

The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC, which was initially adopted in December 1997 but entered into force only in February 2005 after Moscow ratified it, provides legally binding commitments for developed countries and some transition economies, including Russia,

to modulate emissions to an agreed-upon level by 2012 relative to the baseline of their 1990 emissions. Russia only agreed not to exceed 1990 levels, rather than reducing its emissions below that baseline. As a result of the post-Soviet emissions drop, without any additional efforts Russian emissions will not return to 1990 levels before at least 2020. In December 2009, Russia was 40% below the baseline.

Therefore, Moscow's participation in Kyoto required it to make no additional efforts to meet its obligations. Further, Russia stood to gain billions of dollars through the various flexibility mechanisms, such as trading of carbon credits, outlined in the Protocol. Nonetheless, Russia withheld its approval for seven years.

The Protocol could not have come into force unless at least 55 countries representing at least 55% of global carbon emissions ratified it. When the first round of commitments was announced, enough countries were willing to ratify the treaty but their emissions did not add up to the share of global carbon output required for enactment. Once the United States declared that it would not join, Russia's participation was necessary to meet that goal. In other words, because of its contribution to global warming as the third-largest emitter, Russia's eventual decision to participate in Kyoto proved crucial in bringing the treaty into force.

While Russia's decision to ratify the Protocol is often cited as a demonstration of its productive role in contributing to international efforts to control global warming, Moscow's motives were far less altruistic. Indeed, it is widely believed that Putin agreed to sign the Kyoto Protocol in return for the European Union's granting of certain concessions in its negotiations with Russia on its bilateral World Trade Organization (WTO) accession protocol—in effect giving its blessing to Russia's membership.

Since 2008 the international community has been negotiating a follow-on agreement to the Kyoto Protocol that should provide a longer-term framework for international efforts to combat climate change. Russia's behavior in this period made it clear that its participation in Kyoto had not transformed it into a leader in the international effort to address climate change. In its submission to the UNFCCC prior to the Poznan Conference of Parties (COP) in December 2008, Russia declared the goal of a 25 to 40% reduction from 1990 levels by 2020 “unreasonable” and asserted that legally binding commitments must be interpreted as “non-enforceable, non-punitive as well as flexible.”

In June 2009, President Medvedev announced Russia's post-Kyoto proposed target as 10 to 15% be-

low the 1990 baseline. It would be a stretch to call this ambitious: It translates to an effective 30 to 35% emissions *increase* from the 2007 level and implies an *acceleration* in annual emissions growth. Although Medvedev upped his pledge in December 2009 to a 20 to 25% drop, this still is not as ambitious as it could be; independent studies have shown that at least a 30% reduction is possible. According to the Russian scholar Georgi Safonov, his own goal of a 40% decline in energy intensity by 2020 would necessitate a greater decrease in emissions below the 1990 baseline than he seems willing to commit to in the context of the climate talks.

Its track record at recent multilateral meetings demonstrates that Russia has largely been a passive player in international climate policy. At meetings of the parties to the UNFCCC and other climate-related gatherings such as the Major Economies Forum (MEF), Russia is notable for its silence; its negotiators are not active participants, let alone leaders, in the talks and take little initiative. Its attitude was neatly summed up by one of the government's lead climate experts: “The solution to climate change negotiations lies between the US and China.” In other words, Russia is content to sit on the sidelines until the other players come to an agreement and then decide whether to participate.

On the one hand, this may be a deliberate strategy: While the other major emitters debate and look for compromise, Russia has complete freedom of maneuver. It can agree on a strict emissions reduction target or disagree with it; agree on financing adaptation needs of least developed countries or object to them; accept flexibility mechanisms or continue avoiding their use. On the other hand, pure bureaucratic and political factors might be at play: Without a strong signal from the political leadership that an ambitious treaty is a priority, working-level officials will be highly unlikely to take the initiative on their own. As the Russian saying goes, initiative is punishable.

Russia's behavior at the 15<sup>th</sup> COP (COP-15), which was held in December 2009 in Copenhagen, represented a slight, but nonetheless important, departure from this trend. The goal of the Copenhagen meeting was to reach a legally binding agreement on further greenhouse gas emissions cuts, create an arrangement to finance adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, and delineate mechanisms for international cooperation in emissions reductions, among other issues. Given its contribution to global warming and status as a Kyoto signatory, Russia's position at the COP-15 was important. Further, if it were to have demanded to be compensated for the massive amount of carbon credits

it had accumulated under Kyoto, Moscow could have torpedoed an agreement or at least made a functioning carbon market impossible.

What changed at Copenhagen was the Russian leadership's engagement with the issue. Medvedev not only attended but also created an entry in his video blog on the subject and made a major speech at the conference. In his address, he said that "Russia is ready to play the most active part in all of this processes [sic]. We recognize our share of the responsibility and this is the guideline in our efforts." Such rhetoric represents a departure from his predecessor; indeed, it is hard to imagine the current prime minister giving such a speech.

Russia did end up signing the so-called Copenhagen Accord at the COP-15, but, as per the pattern described above, it played no significant role in formulating it. There was one breakthrough at Copenhagen: Russia agreed to provide funding for the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund, which will finance adaptation and mitigation activities in least developed countries. Russia had previously refused to participate in any such assistance projects.

On February 1, 2010, Russia submitted its plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as the Copenhagen Accord requires. Strangely, its submission appears to have been a step backwards: Russia committed to a 15 to 25% reduction from the 1990 baseline, as opposed to the 20 to 25% that Medvedev had proclaimed less than two months earlier. The commitment was conditioned on the participation of all major emitters in a legally binding agreement and on Russia's forest sinks being taken into account in calculations of its overall emissions. This latter demand has become a top priority for Russian international climate policy. On average, Russian forests absorb about 300 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum. However, Russia supports allowing countries not to account for emissions from forest management until this sector becomes a net source of emissions and favors accounting approaches that would allow for "hiding" expected increased emissions from growth in the forestry sector. In other words, commercial motives seem to be at work in addition to other factors.

Despite the increased engagement in Copenhagen, Russia's relatively unambitious submission shows that it largely remains a passive actor on climate issues. Further, it underscores that Russia's climate policy continues to be based on the view that the drop in emissions that resulted from the post-Soviet economic contraction represents a "contribution" to global efforts to control climate change. The wrenching social impact of economic contraction, and thus the "contribution," is considered a

"sacrifice" made by the Russian people in the fight against global warming. As a result, Russian policymakers consider that their country is entitled to avoid an affirmative stance on emissions reductions, which they consider a threat to economic growth.

### **Climate Policy at Home**

Russia does not have a discrete climate change policy, but instead the government considers policies and measures in the energy sector, industry, municipal heat supply, forestry, and other areas as having side benefits in terms of greenhouse gas emission reduction. The secondary impacts of other policies and measures are as close as Russia gets to a "climate policy."

That said, on the eve of his departure for Copenhagen in December 2009, President Medvedev took a major step forward in climate policy and signed the Russian Climate Doctrine. The Doctrine marks the first attempt at institutionalizing climate change policy. Among other steps, it acknowledges the harmful effects of climate change, states the need to take into account climate-related consequences in economic, social and other policies, and outlines measures for adaptation—which could address the potential damage from permafrost melting, infrastructure collapse, South-to-North spread of infectious diseases— and mitigation.

However, the Doctrine is an inadequate framework for policymaking. It does not establish concrete goals for mitigation and adaptation, mechanisms for such activities, or a framework for international cooperation. Further, the document places much more emphasis on adaptation than mitigation. Kristin Jørgensen of the Bellona Foundation called the doctrine a "call to take cover." The doctrine is to a significant degree window dressing, creating the appearance that the Russian government really cares about climate change while not outlining a program that would amount to a serious attempt to address it. That said, at the meeting of the Security Council in March 2010, Medvedev issued a presidential instruction to the Government to "approve a package of measures for implementing" the Doctrine by October 1, 2010, including "drafting the necessary laws and regulations." Time will tell whether the Cabinet takes his request seriously.

### **Politics of Climate Change Policy**

As this review demonstrates, climate policy has not been a major priority for the Russian government. Russia has shown no inclination to lead in international climate talks nor has it taken major steps in the domestic context to mitigate climate change or address its impact.

This stance could be the result of the elite's continuing skepticism about the anthropogenic nature of climate change and the negative impact global warming will have on Russia. In 2003, then-President Putin famously quipped, "For a northern country like Russia, it won't be that bad if it gets two or three degrees warmer," since "we would spend less on fur coats" and "our grain production would increase." More recent statements, such as Federation Council Speaker Sergei Mironov's comment that the "impact of greenhouse-gas emissions on the climate has not been studied sufficiently," and therefore the Kyoto Protocol has little meaning, indicate that similar views persist, even if the top leadership has changed its tune. (Mironov also claimed that a process of global cooling was taking place, and cited the paintings of the Dutch Masters, which featured bright landscapes, as evidence.)

Climate skepticism is in fact rife throughout Russian society, even in certain quarters of the scientific community. Indeed, in the weeks leading up to the COP-15, and while it was taking place, these skeptics were particularly vocal. In early November 2009, Russia's state-owned Channel 1 aired a documentary called "The

History of Deception: Global Warming," which purported to demonstrate that the link between human activity and climate change was fabricated by a media conspiracy. The bulk of the mid-December issue of the respected *Kommersant-Vlast*' political magazine was devoted to climate skepticism, with one article alleging that efforts to address climate change are in fact a cover for funneling money to a cottage industry of scientists, green-tech firms, and corrupt developing countries. The week before the COP-15, the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oceanography issued a report claiming that human activity is not a major factor in climate change, while the director of the research institute of the Ministry of Energy attributed global warming to the slowing of the Earth's rotation.

Perhaps as a result of this drumbeat of pseudoscience, only 40% of Russians consider climate change a serious issue, as opposed to 70% of Turks. There is also a chronic ignorance of environmental problems in the country. The lack of public pressure and the dominance of climate change skepticism have attached no political costs to keeping climate change a low priority issue for the Kremlin.

#### *About the Author*

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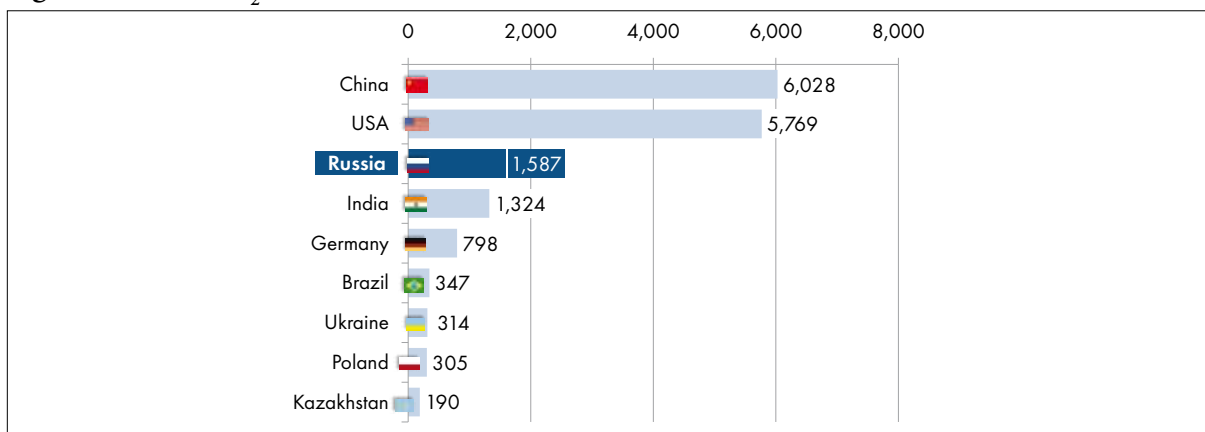
#### *Recommended Reading*

- Anisimov, Oleg, ed., *Osnovnye prirodnye i sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie posledstviia izmeneniia klimata v raionakh rasprostraneniia mnogoletnemerzlykh porod: prognoz na osnove sinteza nabludenii i modelirovaniia* [The Main Environmental and Socio-Economic Consequences of Climate Change in Regions with Widespread Permafrost: A Prognosis Based on a Synthesis of Observation and Modeling] (evaluation report, Greenpeace Russia, November 2009), [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org).
- Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation, <http://eng.kremlin.ru>
- Cline, William R., *Global Warming and Agriculture: Impact Estimates by Country* (Washington: Petersen Institute for International Economics, 2007), 59.
- Medvedev, Dmitry, Opening remarks at Meeting on Climate Change, February 18, 2010, <http://eng.kremlin.ru> (accessed on February 20, 2010).
- UNFCCC, Quantified Economy-Wide Emissions Targets for 2020 for Annex I Parties, <http://unfccc.int>.
- World Bank, *Adapting to Climate Change in Europe and Central Asia* (Washington, June 2009), [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).
- World Wildlife Foundation Russia, *Climate Change Impacts in the Russian Arctic: Searching for Ways for Adaptation*, 2009, [www.wwf.ru](http://www.wwf.ru).

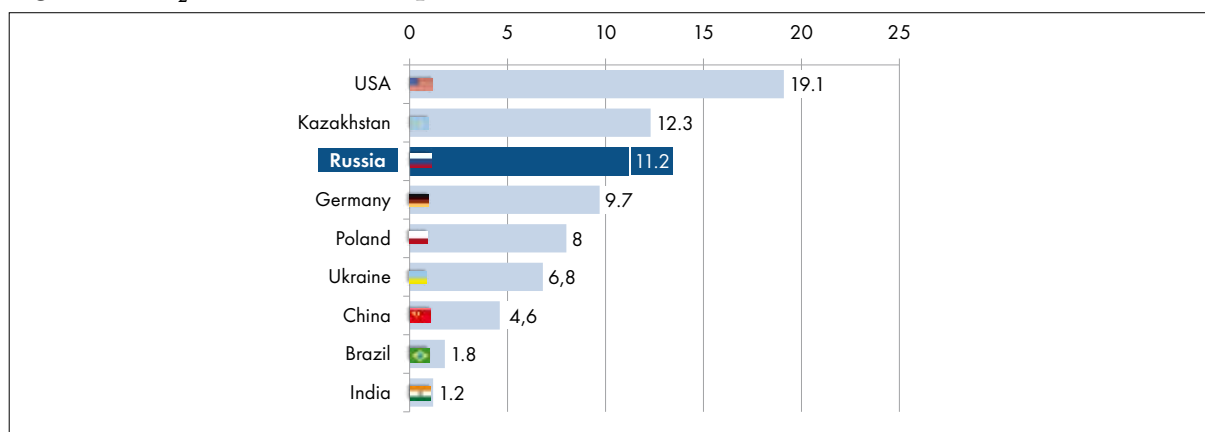
**Diagrams**

**Russian CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissions in International Comparison**

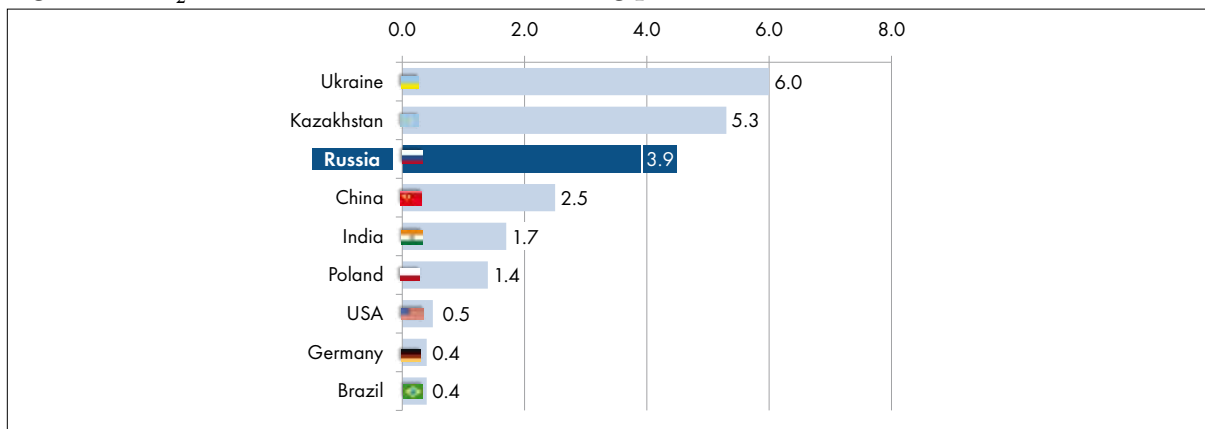
**Figure 1: Total CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Per Annum (mln. tons, 2007)**



**Figure 2: CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Per Capita (mln. tons, 2007)**



**Figure 3: CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions in Relation to GDP (kg per 2,000 US\$, 2007)**



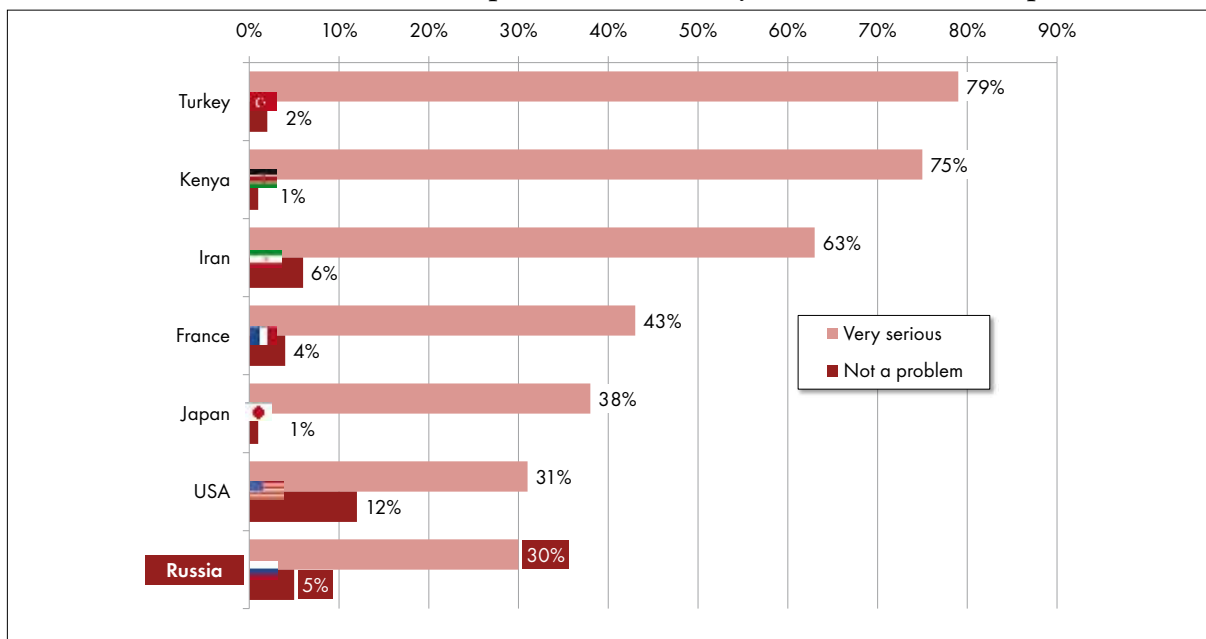
Source: International Energy Agency: Key World Energy Statistics 2009, p. 48–57,  
[http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2009/key\\_stats\\_2009.pdf](http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2009/key_stats_2009.pdf)



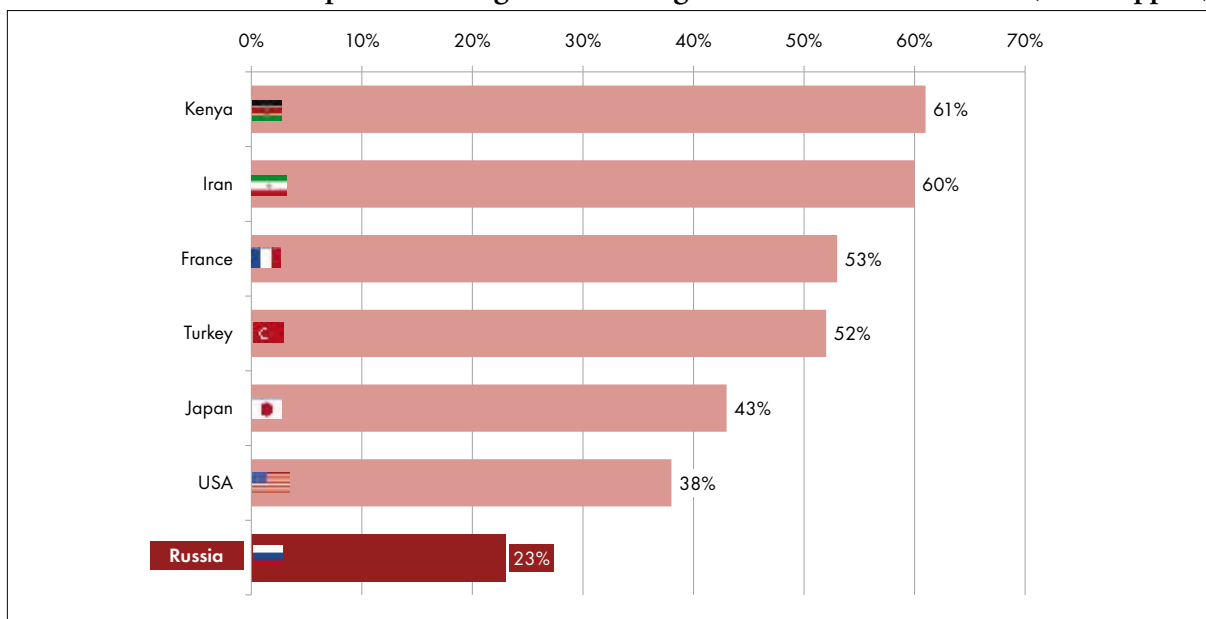
**Opinion Poll**

## Russian Public Opinion On Climate Change and Climate Policy in International Comparison

In your view, is climate change, also known as global warming, a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem? (% for very serious and for not a problem)

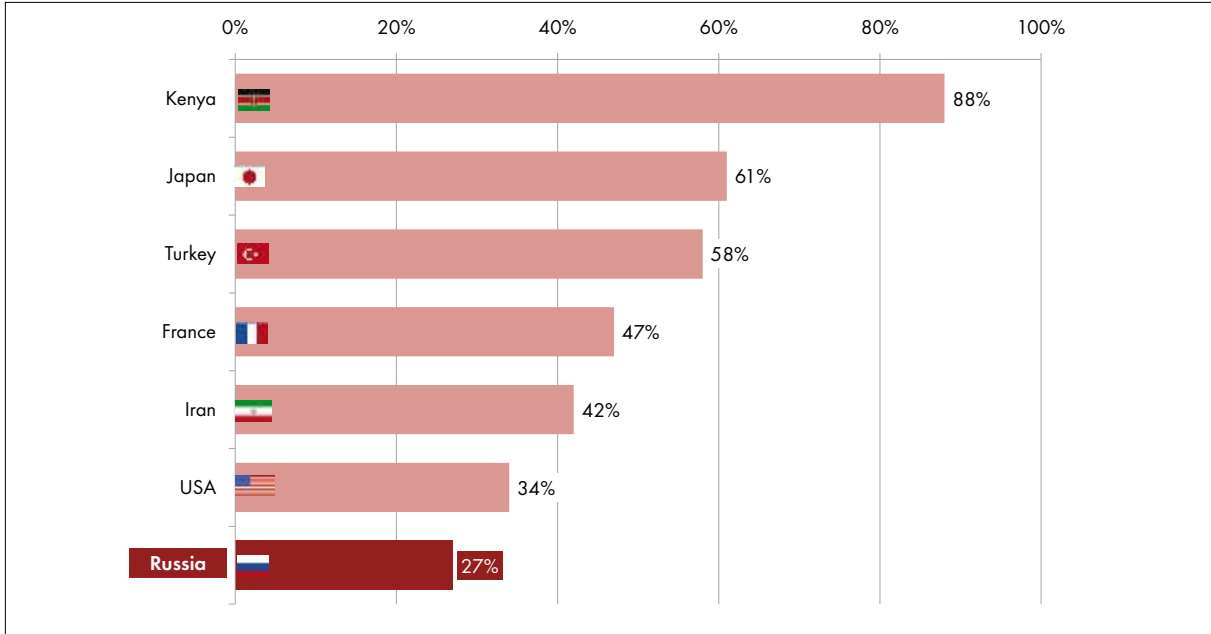


On the subject of climate change, is it your impression that among the scientists of the world most scientists think the problem is urgent and enough is known to take action? (% of support)

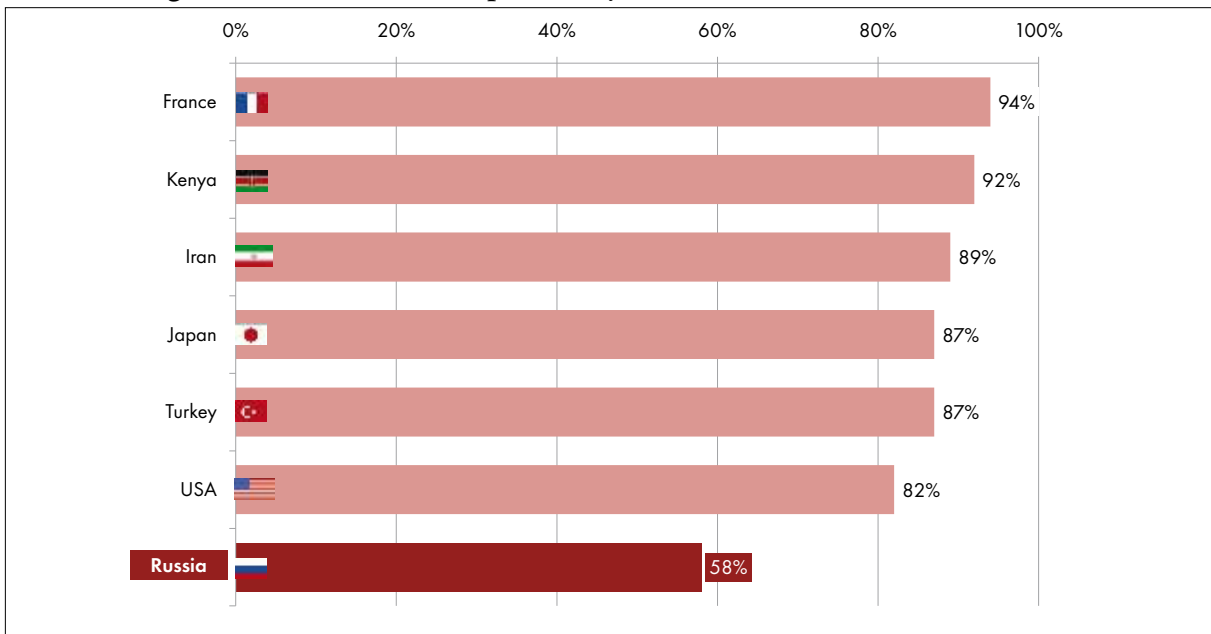


Source: representative polls of the population organized by WorldPublicOpinion.Org, conducted in September and October 2009, [www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll)

**When do you think climate change will start to substantially harm people in our country?  
Percentage of respondents opting for “People are being harmed now”**

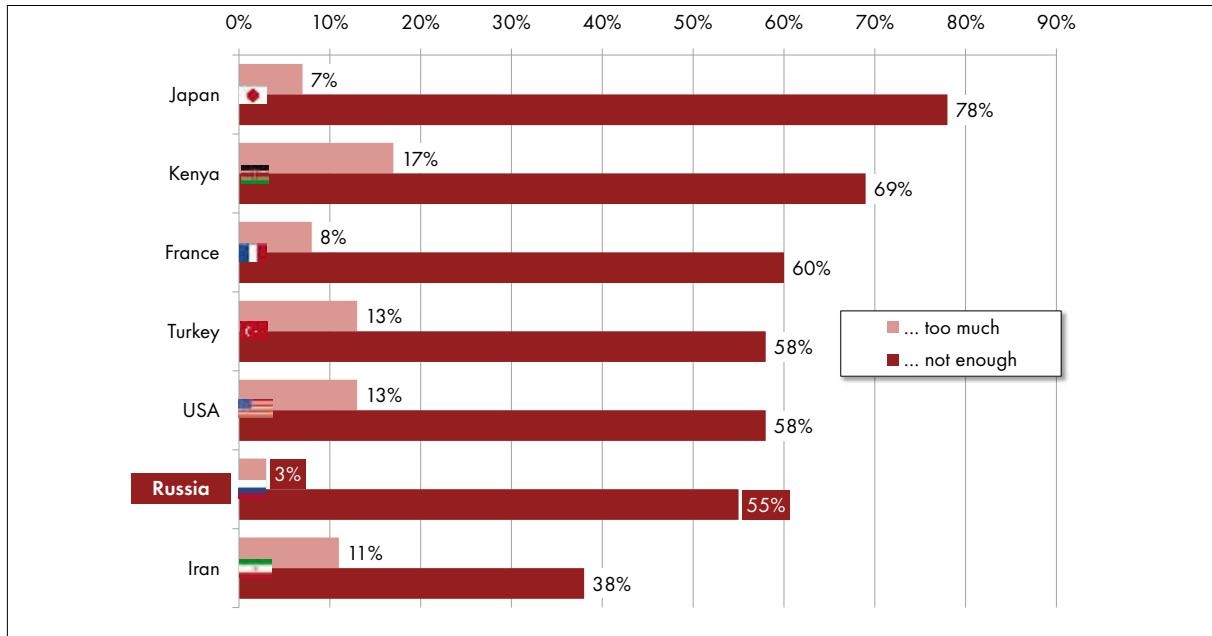


**Do you think our country does or does not have a responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change? (% for does have a responsibility)**



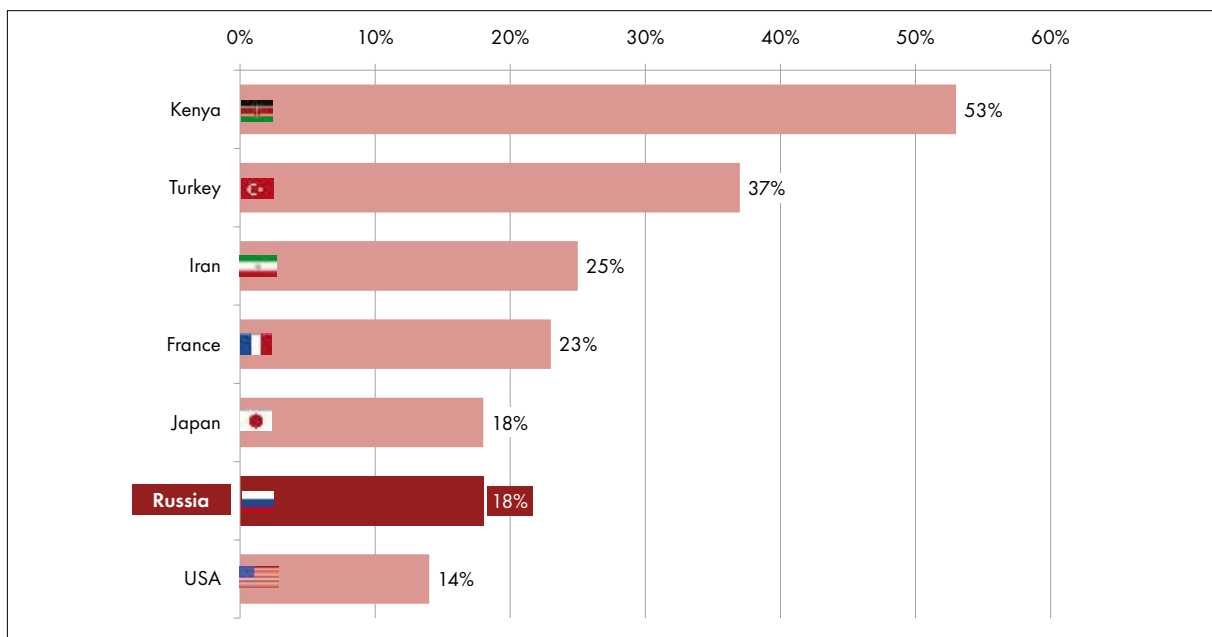
Source: representative polls of the population organized by WorldPublicOpinion.Org, conducted in September and October 2009, [www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll)

To deal with the problem of climate change, do you think your government is doing ...



Note: remaining answers for "about the right amount" and "do not know".

Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following statement: Dealing with the problem of climate change should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs. (% for agree strongly)



Source: representative polls of the population organized by WorldPublicOpinion.Org, conducted in September and October 2009, [www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2010/climatepoll)

## Analysis

# Social Movements for the Preservation of Forests in North-West Russia: From Consumer Boycotts to Fostering Forest Certifications

By Maria Tysiachniouk, St. Petersburg

## Abstract

This article examines the transformation of Russia social movements and their gradual de-radicalization. It shows how a single social movement evolved in Karelia, starting with efforts to use market campaigns to preserve the forests, then becoming involved in negotiations to create special nature preserves, and ultimately participating in the process of forestry certification as an expert organization. It examines how the social movements relate to businesses and the state. Using concrete examples, it demonstrates how a non-governmental organization succeeded in reconciling two completely different roles: serving in opposition to corporations with the goal of requiring them to behave in a socially and ecologically responsible manner and providing expert support to them. In doing this, the article shows how the environmental movement itself and the NGOs within it are changing.

## Introduction

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the radical social movements that spontaneously appeared to address pressing environmental issues have practically disappeared from Russia. The only exception is the organizations dealing with fill-in construction in urban areas. In fact, the earlier differences that divided the radical social movements from those more inclined to consensus-building activities that were so characteristic of the post-Perestroika period no longer exist. Now the most striking feature of these more-evolved environmental organizations is their high professionalism and expert knowledge, traits which have brought them closer in character to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Moreover, the contemporary Russian environmental movement has joined the global network of movements and transnational organizations, making it part of the larger global processes.

These changes were driven, in part, by the transformation in the financing of Russian social organizations and NGOs that took place in the first decade of this century. During the Perestroika years and immediately afterwards a large amount of money directed at developing democracy and civil society came into Russia. The environmental organizations were also financed from these funds. Later this income shrunk significantly and the environmental NGOs had to either take money from the state or focus on expert work to support themselves. The transformation in the source of financing had an impact on the character of the NGOs, making them professional and consensus-oriented and, accordingly, less radical. In this article, I analyze this transformation of the Russian environmental movement on the example of an organization working for the pres-

ervation of the old growth forests in the Karelia region of northwest Russia.

The article focuses on social movements that use market mechanisms to influence transnational corporations. The two main forms of market mechanisms are consumer boycott campaigns (striking at the market power of the corporations) and certification procedures. Both strategies seek to build socially and ecologically responsible markets by converting companies from “irresponsible” into “responsible” firms. These market mechanisms function by pressuring corporations through campaigns to mobilize consumers to boycott their goods or, more recently, simply making the threat of such boycotts. By contrast, certification works by identifying and promoting those corporations that demonstrate social and ecological responsibility. The ecological organizations support the most strict certification system, which is voluntary certification backed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This system is currently being implemented in Russia and it is what I have in mind in discussing certification.

## Market Campaigns

During Soviet times, strict border security prevented economic activity in Karelia’s border forests. However, with the advent of the Gorbachev era reforms, these forests were opened and were actively developed, particularly by suppliers to foreign companies. This activity attracted the attention of environmental organizations, particularly Greenpeace, because according to Greenpeace Karelia’s trees were old growth forests that were valuable to the local ecology or relatively untouched by human intervention. Greenpeace was the first to apply the understanding “old growth” to the

boreal forests of Russia's northwest region. Following Greenpeace, other ecological organizations, like the European Taiga Rescue Network and the Russian organizations Center for Biodiversity Preservation and the Social-Ecological Union, became interested in Karelia's border forests. In working to save the trees, the groups actively discussed issues related to establishing special nature preserves. By 1992, the idea of creating the Kalevala Park in the area began to take shape. This proposal appealed to NGOs in both Russia and Finland because it sought to preserve ethnic villages, along with their folk stories and songs, as well as the surrounding trees. In 1995, under Greenpeace's aegis, the Forestry Club was established to protect the forests and its membership included the Social-Ecological Union, the Center for Biodiversity Preservation and other groups. Additionally, the Karelian Regional Nature Conservancy (SPOK) was established by students who were working with Greenpeace.

The Forestry Club began to monitor the old growth forests in the European part of Russia and particularly in Karelia, where the question of logging old growth forests was particularly acute. During those early post-Soviet years, many Finnish and Swedish forestry firms were active in the area. Formally their actions were legal, but the companies effectively took advantage of the fact that Russia did not have comprehensive environmental legislation in place. The organizations in the Forestry Club began work to define criteria for old growth forests and began preparing a map showing their locations. They also began to monitor the harvesting of the trees and their transportation across the border to Finland.

At the end of the 1990s, the Taiga Rescue Network and Greenpeace began to expand their information activities identifying the location of the old growth forests and the activities of companies working in them from Swedish and Finnish companies to include British and German firms as well. In cooperation with an international network of NGOs, the Forestry Club began to distribute its maps of the old growth forests to all forestry companies and their consumers: pulp and paper mills, publishers, and construction firms. They also gave the maps to the governments of Karelia, Finland, and Sweden. Beginning in 1996, they initiated direct actions in the Kostamuksha region of Karelia and began protesting against the pulp and paper mills of Finnish companies. These actions and the consumer boycotts organized by the NGOs in Europe forced the forestry companies to accept a voluntary moratorium on harvesting the old growth forests. The first company to do so was Stora Enso, which announced a moratorium on cutting in the disputed areas of Karelia.

In 1997, several additional companies joined the moratorium, including the Finnish transnational corporation UPM-Kymmene. Even more companies joined the moratorium in later years. Greenpeace's old growth maps became informal laws for the forestry companies, guiding their activities, or more precisely, the areas where they refused to work. This informal law worked more effectively than the official Russian laws. However, the environmental movement realized that the moratorium on logging old growth areas was only a temporary solution for preserving the forests and continued to seek other tools for conservation, negotiating designation of specially protected areas with governmental agencies and by promoting companies for certification. These types of activities required that the previously radical organizations turn into ones that were more consensus-oriented. Thus, the market campaigns of the 1990s identified the issue of preserving the old growth forests in Karelia and began a process to save them that unfolded over many years. As we will see below, they produced tangible results.

### Negotiations

From the moratoriums, which provided only a temporary solution, the environmental NGOs began searching for an official way to defend the status of the forests. To achieve this goal, the NGOs had to join negotiations at various levels of government: local, republican, and federal. The environmental organizations led by Greenpeace tried to place the Karelian forests on the UNESCO World Heritage list. They proposed that Russia, Finland, and Norway jointly create a Fennoscandia "greenbelt" which would include 20 forests located on 1,000 km of border territory. However, this initiative did not succeed.

At the same time, the European Union set aside grant money for the creation of four specially protected areas, which included Kalevala Park. This park already had been the object of dispute between the NGOs and the forestry companies, and the NGOs had sought to use boycotts to pressure the companies into accepting their view of the park. Ultimately, to create the park, the NGOs had to engage in numerous negotiations and dispute-resolution procedures, forcing them to stop acting as a member of the opposition and develop a completely different practice: seeking compromise.

The process of agreeing to set up the park, which proceeded in parallel at various levels of government, was slowed by the contradictory interests of the federal and regional authorities and also by the on-going process of reforming the forestry sector. In 2000–2001, an agreement was reached at the local (municipal) lev-

el. However, republican officials objected to what they thought was the unacceptably large size of the territory. The main burden for finding a compromise and fighting for the territory fell on the shoulders of the NGOs. Only in 2002 did the documents go to Moscow for final agreement, where they started to move from one agency to the next, usually with great delay. The problem was that there was a partial change in the responsible agencies and people, who were dealing with this question, and a reassignment of functional responsibilities.

As a result of the delays, the environmental impact assessment eventually expired. Ultimately Greenpeace paid for a new one. In this sense it played a role that was completely unsuited for a radical environmental group. For Greenpeace, the question of preserving the old growth forests was the top priority and the organization could not allow the state delays to block the process of creating the park. Finally, the park was officially created in 2006. The negotiations continued for a long time regarding all the other disputed territories as well. As a result of the efforts of the NGOs, some of the old growth forests were transformed into special nature preserves. Accordingly, in 2009 all the territories with old growth forests entered into the system of state territorial planning as possible preserves. However, to ensure that these territories actually become preserves, the NGO must still do much more work: conduct negotiations with companies that are leasing these plots and achieve the agreement of governments at all levels to create the preserves. Achieving these goals means participating in numerous new negotiations.

Fortunately, the certification process greatly eased the interactions between the NGOs and business. According to the standards of forestry certification, the old growth forests are considered to be of high conservation value and therefore cannot be cut down. The companies began, where they could, to respect prohibitions on cutting down trees in the disputed plots, seeking to avoid conflicts with the NGOs and violations of the certification standards in cases where the certification of the company was in question. Where they could not give up the plots, they continued the old moratoriums or signed new ones with the NGOs. Thus, the NGOs gained a new instrument for dialogue with business, which they began to use actively, working in the framework of the certification process.

### Working as Experts

In 2004–2010 the certification process moved quickly in Russia and in 2006 Russia moved into second place, behind Canada, in terms of the amount of certified for-

estry territory in the world. During the process of certification, corporations began actively to recruit environmental NGOs to serve as experts in facilitating compliance with the standards. The certification process took place at the same time that foreign grant-makers sharply reduced their financing for NGOs. Accordingly, many NGOs began to engage in the certification process in order to develop a new and reasonably stable source of financing. The enterprises that sought expert help from the NGOs were seeking to satisfy principles 6 and 9 of the certification standards of the FSC. The sixth principle focuses on preserving biological diversity and unique and fragile ecosystems; the ninth principle calls for saving high conservation value forests.

The SPOK NGO is among the groups working with businesses as certification experts. However, the organization did not give up its monitoring role for the opposition. Thus, in its work with Karelian companies, SPOK has carried out a double function: both as partner and as a “punitive-observer.” In addition to providing expert services to numerous companies seeking certification, SPOK could, for example, place one at the bottom of a ratings list that it compiled or even send a complaint to an auditor.

Although SPOK works as a certification expert and is a registered consultant for the FSC, its main priority remains the preservation of old growth forests. As a consequence of these different priorities, SPOK, in the course of its certification consultations, devotes primary attention to the question of preserving virgin forests and only secondarily worries about the companies’ interest in addressing other FSC principles and criteria and preparing an obstacle-free path toward certification. As a result, the companies themselves must address the various aspects of certification that do not concern virgin forests, the preservation of valuable ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity.

The relations between SPOK and the companies it consults with are best illustrated on the example of its relations with the holding-company Investlesprom, and particularly its subsidiary “Northern Logging Company” (NLC), which works in Karelia.

In 2006, the partnership between SPOK and the company was relatively smooth since at first the lands the company leased held few virgin forests. The question of maintaining biodiversity interested the company to such an extent that it worked with SPOK in 2007 to develop a “Field Guide to Identifying Biodiversity in Central Karelia.” In 2009 SPOK developed a similar guide for all of Karelia. SPOK instructed company experts in this matter and, according to the conditions

of the contract, continued to research the territory for particularly valuable forestry tracts.

The disagreements with NLC began later, when, thanks to the company's insufficient managerial resources, it did not pay enough attention to preserving biodiversity. In the course of raids conducted during 2008 and 2009, SPOK uncovered many violations and examples of only partial fulfillments of company obligations in this area. Additionally, when the NGO further researched the leased tracts, it identified many more valuable forests that it wanted to preserve. In 2007, SPOK found an old growth forest near Lake Maslozero, where the company planned to log and had even built a road. The question of whether to log in this area became the topic of heated conversations. During the course of these discussions, SPOK transformed from an "ideal partner" into an "active opponent." However, long discussions resulted in a compromise that was acceptable for both sides. Nevertheless, as the company's territory expanded, many more disputed tracts were found. For example, the company acquired a forestry processing factory in Muezerski Raion, where there are several virgin forests. SPOK had already fought for many years with the factory to preserve these lands and then began to spar with the holding company once it gained control of these forests. A compromise was found for these lands as well.

These are only two examples of the difficult discussions and negotiations, during the course of which SPOK transformed at times from a consulting company back into a radical NGO prepared to fight to preserve the virgin forests. It is true that in achieving compromise the sides once again became partners. Nevertheless, in 2009–2010 disagreements once again arose regarding the planned nature preserve that had been included in the territorial planning documents governing forests in different parts of Karelia. Even as I write this article, SPOK must resolve many issues connected with virgin

forests and especially valuable ecosystems. A large number of differences await resolution, requiring the NGO to use its entire arsenal of influence levers—from expert consultation and negotiations to the toughest oppositional pressure tactics.

### Conclusion

The case study examined here demonstrated one of the key differences distinguishing Russian social movements from their foreign counterparts. In Western Europe, in countries with a highly developed civil society, NGOs as a rule occupy various niches and different NGOs play different roles: the radicals fight and back the opposition, while those that seek consensus pursue negotiations. Combining these two various functions in one NGO is extremely rare. In Russia, the situation is different. Here only a limited number of NGOs are active, most of them having been set up during the Perestroika period. Given such a limited number of organizations, they must address various questions, occupying two niches at the same time. The limited availability of financing also facilitates this situation since it forces NGOs to become involved in various types of projects simply to ensure their survival. Thus, when it had a chance to win a grant to create a nature preserve, SPOK became involved in this issue. Similarly, SPOK took advantage of the opportunity to work on certification as an expert organization since this effort gave it the chance to combine striving toward its goals with an opportunity to finance its activities. Accordingly, in Russia, the division of labor between radical and consensus-oriented groups that is characteristic for the world's third sector began to disappear at the beginning of the 2000s. This case study showed that this trend affected the once most radical organizations and social movements. They did not give up their radical approaches, but began to combine them with negotiations and expert activity.

#### About the Author

Maria Tysiachniouk is a researcher at the Center for Independent Social Research in St. Petersburg.

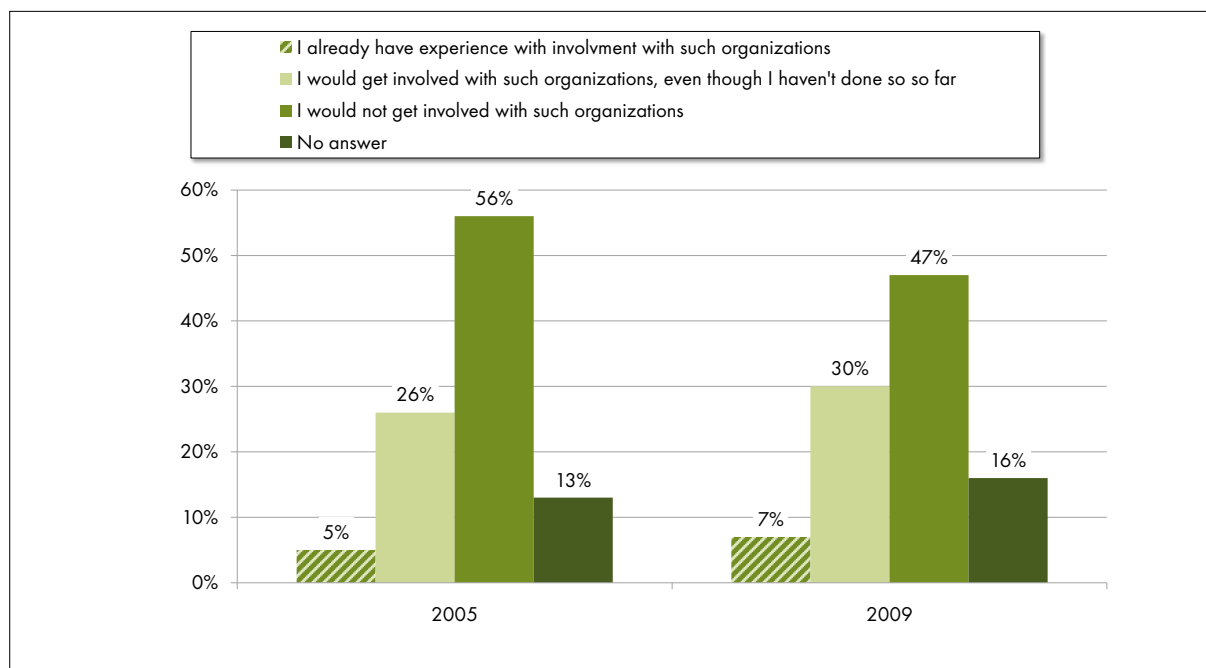
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## Opinion Poll

### Civic Action to Protect the Environment

Would you get involved with social movements that are concerned with ecological problems?  
(closed question, one answer)



How exactly would you get involved with protecting the environment? (closed question, any number of answers)

	2005	2009
Participation in campaigns to plant trees, clear rubbish, etc.	33%	36%
Ecological inspections (exposing illegal felling of trees and clearing of bushes, and illegal garbage dumps)	14%	13%
Collection of signatures for petitions to representatives of the executive	12%	9%
Participation in protest activities (rallies, demonstrations, pickets)	8%	6%
Participation in educational work (school lessons, organizing seminars, etc.)	10%	6%
Donation for environmental protection activities	4%	5%
I will not get involved under any circumstances	39%	38%
Other	1%	1%
No answer	12%	14%

Source: representative polls conducted by VTsIOM in 2005 and on 30–31 May 2009 <http://wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/12305.html>

Compiled by Christoph Laug



## About the Russian Analytical Digest

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The Russian Analytical Digest is a bi-weekly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen ([www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de](http://www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de)), the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), the Resource Security Institute and the Institute of History at the University of Basel (<http://histsem.unibas.ch/seminar/>). It is supported by the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Digest draws on contributions to the German-language Russland-Analysen ([www.laender-analysen.de/russland](http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland)), the CSS analytical network on Russia and Eurasia ([www.res.ethz.ch](http://www.res.ethz.ch)), and the Russian Regional Report. The Russian Analytical Digest covers political, economic, and social developments in Russia and its regions, and looks at Russia's role in international relations.

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### Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen

Founded in 1982, the Research Centre for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen is dedicated to socialist and post-socialist cultural and societal developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the area of post-socialist societies, extensive research projects have been conducted in recent years with emphasis on political decision-making processes, economic culture and the integration of post-socialist countries into EU governance. One of the core missions of the institute is the dissemination of academic knowledge to the interested public. This includes regular email services with nearly 20,000 subscribers in politics, economics and the media.

With a collection of publications on Eastern Europe unique in Germany, the Research Centre is also a contact point for researchers as well as the interested public. The Research Centre has approximately 300 periodicals from Russia alone, which are available in the institute's library. News reports as well as academic literature is systematically processed and analyzed in data bases.

### The Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich

The Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich is a Swiss academic center of competence that specializes in research, teaching, and information services in the fields of international and Swiss security studies. The CSS also acts as a consultant to various political bodies and the general public. The CSS is engaged in research projects with a number of Swiss and international partners. The Center's research focus is on new risks, European and transatlantic security, strategy and doctrine, area studies, state failure and state building, and Swiss foreign and security policy.

In its teaching capacity, the CSS contributes to the ETH Zurich-based Bachelor of Arts (BA) in public policy degree course for prospective professional military officers in the Swiss army and the ETH and University of Zurich-based MA program in Comparative and International Studies (MACIS); offers and develops specialized courses and study programs to all ETH Zurich and University of Zurich students; and has the lead in the Executive Masters degree program in Security Policy and Crisis Management (MAS ETH SPCM), which is offered by ETH Zurich. The program is tailored to the needs of experienced senior executives and managers from the private and public sectors, the policy community, and the armed forces.

The CSS runs the International Relations and Security Network (ISN), and in cooperation with partner institutes manages the Crisis and Risk Network (CRN), the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP), the Swiss Foreign and Security Policy Network (SSN), and the Russian and Eurasian Security (RES) Network.

### The Institute of History at the University of Basel

The Institute of History at the University of Basel was founded in 1887. It now consists of ten professors and employs some 80 researchers, teaching assistants and administrative staff. Research and teaching relate to the period from late antiquity to contemporary history. The Institute offers its 800 students a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in general history and various specialized subjects, including a comprehensive Master's Program in Eastern European History (<http://histsem.unibas.ch/bereiche/osteuro-paeische-geschichte/>).

### Resource Security Institute

The Resource Security Institute (RSI) is a non-profit organization devoted to improving understanding about global energy security, particularly as it relates to Eurasia. We do this through collaborating on the publication of electronic newsletters, articles, books and public presentations.

Any opinions expressed in Russian Analytical Digest are exclusively those of the authors.

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